



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

Testimony CGA Children's Committee
Testimony by Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Louis W. Burch, Program Coordinator

February 5, 2015
Hartford, CT

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, distinguished members of the CGA Children's Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). Supported by over 80,000 members in Connecticut and New York State, CCE works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment. CCE would like to offer the following testimony in support of HB 5653:

Children's products today are manufactured using a variety of over 80,000 chemicals, the vast majority of which are not thoroughly researched and/or regulated. Chemicals like BPA, tri-phosphate flame retardants, and a growing list of new and untested chemicals are used to produce everything from children's toys and bedding to baby clothes and personal care products. Children are especially vulnerable to the deleterious effects of toxic chemicals due to their small size and developing bodies, and their tendency to put objects in their mouths. Unfortunately, there is no requirement for products containing toxics to be labeled, making it virtually impossible for consumers to look for and avoid toxics in the products they purchase.

The growing body of peer reviewed scientific evidence indicates a strong link between exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products with the dramatic rise in developmental and neurological disorders we have seen in recent decades, including Autism spectrum disorders, learning disabilities, and ADHD. Research also shows significant links between toxic-chemical exposure, beginning in the womb, with certain cancers, including brain cancer and leukemia. **This has led to a growing consensus among the science and health communities that exposure to toxic chemicals is detrimental to the health and development of young children, and should be avoided wherever possible.**

House Bill 5653 is an important part of the strategy to reduce children's exposure to toxic chemicals in the home environment. This legislation would require the Commissioner of Public Health to work in collaboration with the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection and Commissioner of Consumer Protection, to compile a priority list of chemicals of high concern to children based on toxicity. It will help develop a framework for identifying and eliminating dangerous chemicals that are currently being used in manufacturing various consumer goods. The requirement to revise the list every two years and make recommendations to the

legislature will ensure that institutional knowledge about dangerous toxins remains up-to-date, as new products and new chemicals of concern emerge. This will create an incentive for Connecticut-based businesses that use toxic chemicals to work in collaboration with the *Chemical Innovations Institute* to find safe, non-toxic alternatives, which will help advance green chemistry innovation and create much needed jobs in our state.

CCE supports passage of legislation aimed at identifying and phasing out chemicals of high concern to children, but strongly recommends amending the current language to tie Connecticut into the already existing *Interstate Chemical Clearinghouse* (IC2). The IC2 is an association of state, local, and tribal governments that work to support efforts to identify chemicals of concern and develop programs to promote safer alternatives. The IC2 maintains a list of chemicals of concern that are already being used by industry, which would streamline Connecticut's process by working within a framework that already exists. Additionally, IC2 can help build agency capacity by sharing materials, strategies, and trainings, which can allow our state to accomplish more with limited resources.

CCE strongly believes that parents have a right to know what kinds of chemicals are in the products they choose for their children. This legislation is an important first step towards helping families make educated decisions about which products are safe for their children, but Connecticut can and should go farther to find a definitive track to phase chemicals of concern out of children's products altogether. **CCE strongly supports HB 5653, and respectfully urges the Children's committee to protect children's health by passing this legislation out of committee as soon as possible.**

On behalf of our members in Connecticut, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and look forward to working with you on this important issue.